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FOR I/FW, B/G, IIP/G/NEA-SA, B/VOA/N (BANGLA SERVICE) STATE  
FOR SA/PAB, SA/PPD (LSCENSNY, SSTRYKER), SA/RA, INR/R/MR,  
AND PASS TO USAID FOR ANE/ASIA/SA/B (WJOHNSON)

CINCPAC FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR, J51 (MAJ TURNER), J45  
(MAJ NICHOLLS)

USARPAC FOR APOP-IM (MAJ HEDRICK)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [OIIP](#) [OPRC](#) [KPAO](#) [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [BG](#) [OCII](#)  
SUBJECT: Media Reaction: Under Secretary Nicholas Burns'  
visit and U.S. legislators' letter to Secstate; Dhaka

Summary: Commenting on Under Secretary Nicholas Burns'  
comments and U.S. legislators' letter to Dr. Rice,  
newspapers said that Bangladesh must hold credible  
investigations into political murders, stop atrocities  
against minority people and curb extremism with a heavy hand  
to win confidence of the international community.

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Under Secretary Nicholas Burns' Visit  
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"Political Murders: Senators' proposal significant"  
Independent Bangla language newspaper "Samakal" editorially  
comments (6/29):

Bangladesh cannot ignore the proposal made by four Senators  
and eight congressmen to raise the Kibria murder case to the  
U.N. Security Council. This is perhaps the first time U.S.  
legislators have made such a proposal on a political murder  
in Bangladesh.

At present, our administration has taken a flexible stand on  
involving FBI and Interpol in investigations. Previously,  
the British administration tried hard to investigate the  
grenade attack on the British High Commissioner. All these  
investigations point to the fact that if there is a lack of  
efficiency in local law enforcement agencies and if  
cooperation is not forthcoming, then there is little chance  
for foreign agencies to achieve anything. Bangladesh faces  
a hostile situation and its position regarding August 21  
grenade attack and the murder of former finance Minister  
Kibria is controversial. The U.S. legislators' letter  
seeking Dr. Rice's intervention will undoubtedly harm  
Bangladesh's image further. In their letter, they praised  
the government's commitment to identifying perpetrators of  
the attacks. We think the government should take the issue  
seriously and take appropriate measures.

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"The United States' concern, Bangladesh's Reply and  
Consequences"  
Pro-opposition Bangla language newspaper "Sangbad"  
editorially comments (6/29):

U.S. Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns met with the  
Prime Minister, opposition leaders and government ministers  
during his visit to Bangladesh. According to press reports,  
he expressed concern over extra-judicial killings and the  
security of religious minorities, especially atrocities  
against the Ahmadiyya community.... The letter given by four  
Senators and Eight Congressmen to Secretary of State Rice on  
the Kibria murder case proves that donor countries do not  
have confidence in the standard reply from the government,  
although it may hoodwink the people. They urged the  
Secretary of State to take all possible measures to ensure

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an investigation of international standard.

The letter gives an indication of what the consequences may  
be. The entire international community may express, through  
the U.N., its lack of confidence in the measures taken by  
the government. The government must put the perpetrators of  
grenade attacks and the Kibria murder on trial through  
credible investigations. It must stop extrajudicial  
killings and punish criminals under due process of the law.  
There is no other way to gain the confidence of the  
international community.

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"Nicholas Burns' concern"  
Pro-opposition Bangla language newspaper "Janakantha"  
editorially comments (6/29):

The U.S. State Department has been expressing concern over Bangladesh in various ways. Previously, the American Commander of the U.S. Pacific Command expressed similar concerns. Remarks made by U.S. Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns are the latest in the series. He commented on minority issues, extremism and the state of democracy in Bangladesh. He spoke on holding a free and fair election and also did not forget to remind us of the consequences if a proper election is not held. It is clear from Burns's comments that Bangladesh will have to overcome its crisis of democracy. Those who are involved in atrocities against religious minorities and are encouraging extremism must be dealt with seriously. Otherwise, the people will have to face a worse situation.

Thomas